

DRAMATICS

An Educational Magazine for Directors, Teachers, and Students of Dramatic Arts

WRITING THE ONE-ACT PLAY

by DONALD ELSER

THEATRE TODAY IN THE UNITED STATES

(Part Two)

by ARTHUR H. BALLETT

DIRECTING IN THE ROUND

by DELWIN B.
DUSENBURY

THE VICTORIAN AGE

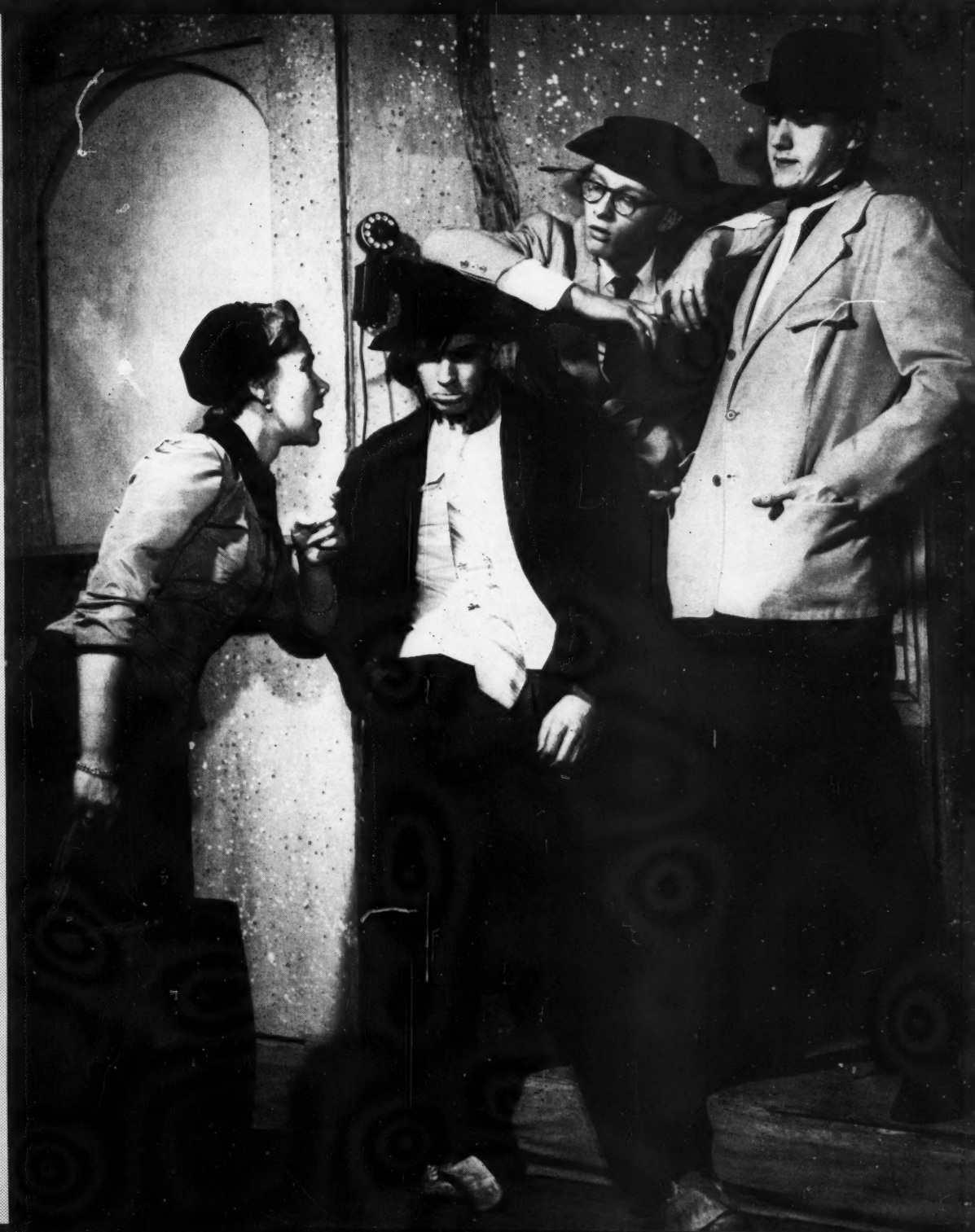
by CHARLES R.
TRUMBO

SIXTH NATIONAL DRAMATIC ARTS CONFERENCE

THE "ORIGINAL" SCRIPT FOR CHILDREN'S THEATRE

by FRIEDA E. REED

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"Can truthfully say that it has much to offer to any high school group who wished to try something very new and with which their audience may be familiar."—John W. Dunlap, Montpelier (Ohio) High School.

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Jack Goodman
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In this Issue

IN MY opinion Donald Elser is one of the better known authors of outstanding one-act plays. Whenever I attend play festivals or our own regional conferences throughout the country, I feel sure that I shall see at least one of his plays included in the program, so much so that I have memorized most of the lines of several of his plays by observation. Mr. Elser in his article, *Writing the One-Act Play*, lays the groundwork for all our Thespian would-be authors by his suggestions. He, a member of the English Department of Youngstown, Ohio, University, is the author of a number of plays of which to me *Balcony Scene*, *Special Guest*, and *Concert in the Park* are the most frequently produced in the secondary school theatre.

—0—

FOR HIS sixth article of his series, *The Elements of Play Direction*, Dr. Dusenbury encourages high school directors to present at least one play each school year "in the round." You who attended our Silver Anniversary National Dramatic Arts Conference will remember the late Margo Jones, champion of this kind of production. Harried high school directors, who must share their school auditoriums with many other school and community activities, may readily welcome Dr. Dusenbury's *Directing in the Round*.

—0—

MR. BALLET brings us up-to-date with our own theatre in his article, *The Theatre Today in the United States (Part 2)* in his series of articles on the history of the theatre. As in last month's article, we meet this month noted authors, directors, and actors with whom all of us are well acquainted; as, Behrman, Kingsley, Odets, Sherwood, Anderson, O'Neill, Wilder, Williams and Miller. Here is indeed today's history in the proverbial nutshell.

—0—

COSTUMES of the Nineteenth Century are described by Mr. Trumbo in his article, *The Victorian Age*, the sixth of his series on the history of costuming. From his descriptions we can easily visualize the lovely costumes of the South during the Civil War, the protruding bustles which became the predominating style near the close of the century, the blue and gray military uniforms, the black suits of Congressmen, so forcefully emphasized by President Abraham Lincoln, and the now comical, but delightful bicycle costumes of that past era. Here indeed were glamor and romance—an enchanting century of new transportation, wars, politics.

—0—

SENIORS, have you yet selected your college or university come next fall? You will find on this page and on preceding and following pages advertisements of some of the best colleges and universities in the country. All of them have superb, recommended theatre departments. A letter to the school of your choice will bring to you by return mail further detailed information. Mention that you are a member of the National Thespian Society.

—0—

FINALLY, we have included a two page pictorial announcement of our forthcoming National Dramatic Arts Conference at Indiana University the week of June 18. We are going to have another grand week of high school theatre. Will you be there?

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Puppeteers of America, annual convention and Workshop, August 6-10. Preceding the convention, a six-week course in *Puppetry* by Kent More.

Twelfth Annual Children's Theatre Conference, a five-day conference, preceded by a two-week credit-bearing Institute. During the regular term we will feature courses in *Creative Dramatics* by Rita Criste and *Children's Theatre* by Mouzon Law.

For information address JAMES H. MCBURNEY, Dean of the School of Speech, or Lee Mitchell, Chairman of the Department of Theatre, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

As I See It . . .

"Always act the part—and you can become whatever you wish to become."

Max Reinhardt

WHEN I read this quotation, my immediate reaction was personal. An opportunist certainly accepts it as his bible; it is stuff which hones ambition. Yet its philosophy can be applied to your own dramatics department and to your school.

What you wish your dramatics department to be in your school can be achieved if you have the will for it. For student participation the glamor of the footlights is in your favor. One needs little additional incentive, for high school students, both boys and girls, like working in plays, be it acting, making and painting scenery, designing and sewing costumes, making-up students for their characterizations, running the show. With proper guidance, meaty material with which to work, stimulating cooperation, the play director can choose participants, rather than draft them from the student body.

Merely presenting the best available plays well, however, is not enough to sell your program to your administration and your community. Even sell-out houses are not enough, for large attendances may be thought of in terms of net financial gains. You must do more. You must convince school and community that participation in your speech and dramatic arts programs is a worthwhile educational experience. You must show them that you are building character, teaching the acceptance of responsibilities, instilling the virtues of honesty, morality, truthfulness, love for and appreciation of the beautiful. You must show even further that students can work well together under student leadership and thus produce superb entertainment. School life experiences must be real life experiences—thus speech and drama are indispensable courses and activities of your school program.

You are not preparing students for the commercial theatre. You are helping today our future doctors, lawyers, teachers, politicians, housewives, machinists, business men and women to become the best in their chosen professions. Your students will become what they wish to become by learning now always to act well their parts, for they will have learned from you that there all the honor lies.

Sell this program to your administrator and community and they will build for you "more stately mansions." You may even be able to smell the flowers. Whatever heights you wish your department to reach need not be wishful thinking—if you act well the part.

—O—

ORCHIDS OF THE MONTH

TO DR. Walter Henry Walters, who was named head of the new department of theatre arts at Pennsylvania State University, effective February 1. This department will be one of three departments—music, art, and theatre arts . . . of the new School of Fine and Applied Arts. Since the death of Arthur C.

Cloetingh in 1954, Dr. Walters served as acting head of the section of dramatics.

—O—

THE CAROLINA PLAYMAKERS HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER SESSION

THE Carolina Playmakers at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C., have announced their tenth annual Summer Session in Dramatic Art for High School Students, to be held at the University from July 16 to August 22. Any high school student on the Junior or Senior level or graduate of the current year who is interested in theatre training is eligible to apply for admission.

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—O—

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ON March 20 and 21 the Fourteenth Delaware Play Festival will be held at the University of Delaware, Newark, under the general supervision of C. Robert Kase, Director of University Dramatic Center. Whether you participate or not in the festival, our Thespian troupes should plan to attend. This festival is becoming nationally known for its superior presentations.

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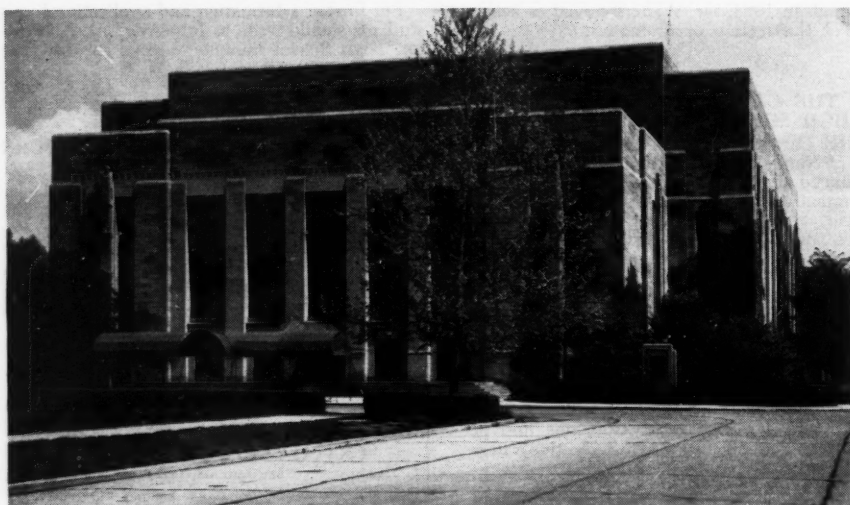
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Mere words cannot express the beauty of the Indiana University Theatre building in which most of the meetings of the Conference will be held. The Hall of Murals, the Foyer, the Auditorium and the Theatre will prove inspirational to all our delegates. A tour of this magnificent structure will be a real treat. And both the auditorium and theatre are air-conditioned, for which we, who suffered from the heat of other Indiana summers, are most grateful.

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June 18 — National Thespian Initiation

Troupe 933, Belleville, Kansas, Sr. High School, Mrs. E. C. Houdek, Sponsor.

June 19 — The Lady's Not for Burning

St. Louis University Theatre, Dr. C. Bernard Gilford, Head Theatre Staff.

June 20 — Pygmalion

The Pitt Players, University of Pittsburgh Theatre, Michael McHale, Director.

June 21 — The Emperor's New Clothes

Troupe 1000, Upper Darby, Pa., Sr. High School, Frieda Reed, Maizie Weil, Co-Sponsors.

June 22 — National Thespian Variety Show

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The pictures on these two pages tell the story far better than I. The environment is right for another successful conference. It is for us on the program committee to build a program comparable to the beautiful architecture which will surround us.

Finally, the National Thespian Society is further honored in that the National Association of Secondary School Principals has placed this activity on the Approved List of National Contests and Activities for 1956.

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- National Banquet
- Faculty Teas
- Thespian National Convention
- Planned Social Hours
- Nationally Known Speakers
- Play-Critiques
- Tours of University
- Radio and Television

MARCH, 1956



AIR VIEW OF THE MEN'S QUADRANGLE



MAIN DINING ROOM, MEN'S QUADRANGLE



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WRITING the ONE-ACT PLAY

by DONALD ELSER

WELL, you have built scenery, worked the lights, held book, applied make-up, served your turn in one capacity or another at the front of the house, acted a little, perhaps even directed a little, and suddenly you find yourself with the desire to write a play.¹ For some reason or another you decide to write a one-act play, possibly because you figure since it is shorter it will be considerably less work.² Perhaps you figure that the idea you have is not a big enough idea to expand into three acts.³ And it is just possible that your best production of the year, or at least the most satisfying one, was the one-act play you entered in the district contest.⁴ Thanks to our high schools and our colleges⁵ the one-act play is very much alive today. Television is producing hybrids—the one-act split in the middle with a commercial—and now and then Broadway discovers the one-act play but never enough to start a trend.

Now let me say right at the beginning that there is no magic formula for any kind of writing. There are no tricks; there is no mumbo jumbo or secret shortcut. It can be a very disappointing business at times and it can get terribly frustrating. If you are a gregarious person⁶ you had better stay as far away from it as possible since this business of shutting yourself in your room and laboring over your notes and your typewriter is also a very lonely job. It can at times be very rewarding. When the house lights go down and the curtain rises and the play—your play—begins, it is a little like, having climbed a high and almost unconquerable mountain, you now can sit back for a half hour or so and enjoy the view.

Now in order to write a play you must have an idea that will develop into a plot. It is not enough just to have your characters sit on the stage and talk.⁷ Many first plays start nowhere and go nowhere. There is no conflict, no audience interest. The "something funny" that happened to the author last week is not so funny when he tries to blow it

1. Let us hope you have performed many or all of the above mentioned duties. Trying to write a play without coming in contact with at least a few of them is like trying to learn to swim without going near the water.
2. A questionable observation.
3. Usually a very sensible observation.
4. Even if you didn't get Superior!
5. And Margaret Mayorga, bless her heart.
6. A gregarious person usually decides to become an actor!
7. I know Shaw did and so can anyone else—if they're as clever as he was.

1956—REGIONAL CONFERENCES—1956 KENTUCKY

Mrs. Henry A. Richeson, Regional Director
Augusta Tilghman High School
Paducah, Kentucky

WESTERN AREA CONFERENCE

APRIL 6, 7
TILGHMAN HIGH SCHOOL

FRIDAY, APRIL 6 —

- 1:30- 3:00 P.M. Registration.
- 3:15 P.M. General assembly, announcements, welcome.
- 3:45 P.M. Tour of new Paducah Tilghman High School with special emphasis on stage facilities.
- 6:30 P.M. Buffet supper and informal dance with floor show presented by students.

SATURDAY, APRIL 7 —

- 8:30- 9:00 A.M. Registration
- 9:00-12:00 P.M. Five 30 minute work-shops with brief question periods between work-shops.
- 12:30 P.M. Luncheon.
Speaker: Mr. Leon C. Miller, Executive Secretary, National Thespian Society.
- 2:00- 4:00 P.M. Three one act plays with brief critiques.

- ARKANSAS** Arkansas State College, State College, Marie Thost Pierce, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 301, Marked Tree High School, April 21.
- COLORADO** Colorado Springs High School, Homer L. Paris, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 759, March 3.
(Southern)
- FLORIDA** Roosevelt Hotel, Jacksonville, Eunice Horne, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 914, Robert E. Lee High School; Speech Dept., University of Florida, Gainesville, Co-host, April 27, 28.
- MASSACHUSETTS** Emerson College, Boston, June Mitchell, Speech Dept., Barbara Wellington, National Councilor and Sponsor, Troupe 254, Durfee High School, Fall River; Nancy Fay Fox, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 987, Marblehead High School, March 3.
- MICHIGAN** Western Michigan College, Kalamazoo, Margaret L. Meyn, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 455, Benton Harbor High School, March 24.
- OHIO** Uhrichsville High School, Edythe Brown, Sponsor, Troupe 1281, Program Chairman; Florence Hill, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 66, Lehman High School, Canton, October 13.
(Southeastern)
- OKLAHOMA** Central High School, Oklahoma City, Maybelle Conger, Regional Director and Sponsor, Troupe 822, Date not yet set.
- PENNSYLVANIA** Ambridge Sr. High School, John C. Barner, Sponsor, Troupe 1032; Jean E. Donahey, National Councilor and Sponsor, Troupe 187, Brownsville Sr. High School, April 21.
(Western)

up into a play. A joke or an anecdote or a wisecrack may provide the germ of an idea for a play, but it will have to grow. Your imagination will have to take over. A newspaper headline, a personal experience, or an interesting conversation will help you in getting an idea, but you will have to turn your imagination loose on it. Of course getting an idea should be the least of your troubles. Separating the good idea from the trivial, the novel and new idea from the hackneyed, the clever idea from the dull will take most of your efforts.

Now that you have the idea pretty well in mind you must decide on your characters—the people you are going to create to tell your story. What does an

editor mean when he sends back a play with the notation, "Weak delineation of character"?⁸ What does a director mean when he says to the playwright, "It's a good idea, but I can't seem to make it come alive"?⁹ What does an actor have in mind when he moans pitifully half way through a rehearsal, "I don't know what I'm supposed to do with this part"?¹⁰ Probably some of the trouble lies in the author's lack of character development. Can you imagine what it would be like to have a roomful of people all of whom were exactly alike? All

8. Editor's name on request!
9. He had my sympathy.
10. Still a very good friend.

(Continued on page 31)

THE Victorian Age refers to the years of reign by Queen Victoria of England that lasted from 1837 to 1901.

The first locomotive was used between Liverpool and Manchester, England, in 1830; and in 1837 a railroad was in operation between Paris and St. Germain, France. That same year sleeping cars were introduced in America between Philadelphia and Baltimore, and at about this time *Godey's Lady's Book* appeared as the first woman's magazine published in the United States.

This was the age of transportation, of the development of railroads, canals, ocean steamboats and the horse-drawn car. But society became tired of the whirl of modern machinery and machine-made products, and went back to the Middle Ages for its inspiration in style.

During the first thirty years of this century the style for women had been suddenly pushed into the old Greek style of dress by the French Revolution that demanded extreme simplicity. It is known as the first tubular cycle because the dresses were tubed in shape. However, in 1830 when the revolt against modern machinery was put into effect, a transition was made from the tubular cycle to what is now known as the bell-shaped cycle. These dresses reflected the romantic qualities of those styles of the Middle Ages.

The bell skirt for the first few years was ankle length or a little above. In 1834 it had reached the floor once more



steps, it allowed more freedom of action than the earlier forms of hoops and clinging petticoats.

In the latter part of the period the crinoline was increased in bulk at the back of the skirt. This was called a "bustle." This later grew in such proportions that by 1868 the "bell-shaped" era gradually changed to one that was known as "back-fullness."

During the first years of the period the sleeves were large without any fullness at the top. They soon decreased in



to the back of the skirt, and the front and sides gradually became flattened. So the wearer who had formerly stood like a clapper in a bell in the center of a great circle, now stood at the front of a very narrow oval with the greater part of her skirt trailing behind her in the form of a bustle. This was the beginning of what is known as the back-fullness cycle.

During the early years the bustle was placed very high under the waistline, skirts were fairly high off the floor, hat brims were tilted upward, and there was often trimming on the topmost part of the sleeve. Later, fashion took a downward trend. The back-fullness became very low, almost to the knees, skirts developed long trains, sleeves were cut low over the hands and had all their trimming at the bottom, and hats slid down the back of the head. Then the movement started upward again: the high bustle returned, the shorter skirt, the choker collar, sleeves puffed up at the top and little hats pointed toward the sky.

During this time the sewing machine was introduced, and decorations reached an all-time high because of the ease of machine-applied trimming.

The bicycle also came in when women were wearing extremely voluminous skirts and enormous sleeves. A special bicycling costume was invented in a short and jaunty skirt that was quite revolutionary to the regular street dress, but it did not influence styles at all and street clothes continued to grow longer and more bothersome.

By 1870 the skirt had become so tight and scant that ladies were often compelled to bind their knees together when

(Continued on page 30)

FILLETS TO FLAPPERS

THE VICTORIAN AGE

by CHARLES R. TRUMBO

and remained long throughout the remainder of the period.

Before 1833 the skirt was fairly moderate in width, but in 1832 it expanded and remained large until 1847. A few years followed of moderate proportions, but in 1852 it grew once more and developed into an enormous size. The widest skirts measured sometimes as much as ten yards in circumference and were worn over hoops which were often as wide as their wearers were tall.

In the early part of this period the skirt was held out by many petticoats and horsehair pads. Around 1854 real hoops began to be worn and then followed the crinoline skirts that were made originally of linen woven with horsehair. Later this term applied to any stiff material in women's skirts. Crinoline was lighter and cooler and though it swayed when the lady walked unless she took care to use little mincing

size, and oftentimes during the 1840's the average sleeve was close fitting.

In 1846 the first bell sleeve with puffed like a miniature replica of the skirt in undersleeve appeared. This sleeve was shape and character, and seemed to echo the contour of the skirt.

The neck line of the Victorian Period was neither high nor low. It was a small circle at the base of the neck, sometimes with a small turned-over collar attached.

The headgear was the familiar bonnet. It was at first worn quite forward, like blinders on a horse; and later so far back that it appeared to be slipping off. Later, a ruffle was added to the back of the bonnet, called a bavolet, which hung down on the shoulders.

The American Civil War ended in the middle 1860's and shortly after this the round bell shape of the skirt began to change. More and more bulk was added

DIRECTING in the ROUND

by DELWIN B. DUSENBURY

IN THE summer of 1955 the American theatre lost one of its most dynamic and vital personalities with the untimely death of Margo Jones. While the "theatre-in-the-round" or arena theatre, which Miss Jones established in Dallas in 1947, was not the first theatre of this type in the United States, her productions and her enthusiasm for her theatre, as expressed in her book, *Theatre-in-the-Round* (1951), gave an added impetus to this type of staging. Miss Jones had pointed out, "A theatre-in-the-round can be started, generally speaking, in any room or tent or place large enough to seat an audience and leave enough space for the playing area." Accordingly, many educational theatre directors have been encouraged to try this type of staging because they consider it a simple and economical method of presenting plays.

Especially, the harried high school director, who shares the school auditorium with many varied activities, might readily welcome the idea of arena staging. In the crowded high school building the director of dramatics can turn to the music rehearsal room, the band room, the school cafeteria, the gymnasium floor or any large room which would permit an oval-shaped playing area of approximately twelve by eighteen feet plus three rows of chairs around the playing area. The dimensions cited are



The *Silver Cord* lends itself well to arena staging as noted in this performance by the University of Florida, directed by Dr. Dusenbury.

those of the first building specifically erected for arena staging — the Penthouse Theatre at the University of Washington. Even though any large room in the high school building can be used and scenery does not have to be built, the fact remains that directing "theatre-in-the-round" involves special techniques and presents certain specific problems which a director must take into consideration.

Play selection, casting and rehearsal procedures must be translated in terms of central staging. Arena staging should be approached not only as a uniquely different form of staging as compared with the proscenium arch or picture frame stage, but also as a serious and significant form of creatively directing a play.

First of all, in selecting the play, while almost any play in the vast repertoire of dramatic literature of the past and present may be used, the director, approaching arena staging for the first time, would do well to select a play with a single setting. The modern period is especially suitable in that the low-back modern style furniture lends itself admirably to the arena setting in that it does not obstruct the audience's view. If the audience is elevated by means of platforms, the type of furniture may not present a problem. Often, however, the temporary transformation of a room does not permit the use of platforms so that the acting area and the audience are on the same level. As a result, the audience will experience some difficulty in seeing the play due to the furniture.

Usually the action of the actors and the dialogue itself will assist in locating for the audience other elements of the setting, such as doors, windows, a fireplace or a picture on the wall. Some directors may feel, however, that they should actually indicate these elements by some concrete unit. Frames of one-fourth or one-half inch strips of wood suspended on wires from the ceiling or braced on the floor may be used. A low window seat or flower box can suggest a window, and a pair of andirons will establish the location of the fireplace. In the production of *The Silver Cord*, one may note that the window is represented by a window seat in the upper left part of the acting area and that the doors or exits are only aisles through the audience. If the director attempts to incorporate too many conventions of the picture frame stage, he may actually interfere with one of the major merits of "theatre-in-the-round." By dispensing with many realistic units of scenery, the

(Continued on page 28)



A dramatic moment from the University of Florida Arena production of *The Petrified Forest*. Scenes of this type require controlled acting and careful direction due to the proximity of the audience to the playing area.

CONTINUING in our exploration of native drama, we come to another of Baker's students, S. N. Behrman (1893-), who perhaps as well as any other has portrayed a form of American comedy of manners on the stage. His *Biography* (1932), *Rain from Heaven* (1934), and *No Time for Comedy* (1939) are typical examples of the sophisticated, slightly off-color but penetrating drama for which Behrman is best known. Dubose Heyward (1885-1940), a novelist as well as dramatist, gained renown for a far different kind of drama, *Porgy* (1927), on which the magnificent Gershwin opera is based. A serious study of Charleston negroes, it is a touching and rewarding drama. Still another Baker student, Sidney Kingsley (1906-), is a dynamic playwright who deals almost exclusively with explosive social problems in an urban society, as exemplified in *Men in White* (1933), *Dead End* (1935), and the recent *Detective Story*. Most recently, however, Kingsley has veered away from serio-social drama, and his newest play was *Lunatics and Lovers*, a farce which met only with mixed success on Broadway.

During the depression years of the 1930's, a new, violent crop of playwrights arose and held for a time the center of the American stage. Priding themselves on their social consciences, they provided the theatre with excitement and polemics and sometimes even with some pretty good drama. Lillian Hellman (1905-) is one such dramatist. *The Little Foxes* (1939) is a tightly knit drama in the manner of Ibsen, dealing with the grasping personalities of a family involved in the machinations of the industrial world. The tabu subject matter of *The Children's Hour* (1934) provided her with a stirring play which was as disturbing as it was beautifully constructed. The other social problem

dramatist of special note is Clifford Odets (1906-). His early plays, best represented by *Awake and Sing* (1935), burn with a sense of social justice and compassionate sympathy for suffering humanity. Perhaps one of the most exciting plays stage-wise, if somewhat doubtful in economic or political logic, is *Waiting for Lefty* (1935). *Having Wonderful Time* (1937), *Golden Boy* (1937), *Rocket to the Moon* (1938), and his succession of Hollywood-tailored products like the recent *The Country Girl* are still interesting enough by most standards as pieces for the theatre, but they lack the furious anger and sense of justice which prevailed earlier.

Less inclined to bombast or fury was Robert E. Sherwood (1896-1955), who



American romantic tragedy came of age with Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*.

wrote a long line of interesting and more-than-competent plays. *The Petrified Forest* (1935) was perhaps a weak



The Skin of Our Teeth, produced by Troupe 763, University of Minnesota High School, Minneapolis, directed by Mr. Ballet, Sponsor.

HISTORY OF THEATRE

THEATRE TODAY in the UNITED STATES

(Part Two)

by ARTHUR H. BALLETT

drama, but the excellent British actor, Leslie Howard, made it memorable as a work for the theatre. *Idiot's Delight* (1936) denotes Sherwood's move toward more serious and specific problems; now dated as an anti-war comedy, it once provided the Lunts with a very successful vehicle. *Abe Lincoln in Illinois* (1888) was his most successful and compelling drama, especially as illuminated by the acting of Raymond Massey.

Maxwell Anderson (1888-) is a playwright who is more to be commended than enjoyed. His admirable crusade to bring poetic drama back to the American stage is laudable; unfortunately, Anderson is not much of a poet. His *Elizabeth the Queen* (1932) and *Mary of Scotland* (1934) are two of a succession of historic-poetic dramas. His most famous and probably his best play is *Winterset* (1935), an effective out-cry against the travesty on justice in the Sacco-Vanzetti case. He is further to be admired for his success in so many different genres: musical comedy in *Knickerbocker Holiday* (1938), politics in *Key Largo* (1939), Biblical history in *Journey to Jerusalem* (1940), and historic mystery in *The Masque of Kings* (1936), to mention but a few.

One playwright, rightly or wrongly, is ranked above all other Americans: Eugene O'Neill, who was born in 1888 to a famous acting family. There is more than a slight possibility that he has been overrated by critics too eager to hail a "great American dramatist." Nevertheless, more than any other writer he had forged the American drama into a world-famous commodity to be reckoned with. His genius knew few barriers, ranging from the overlong but classic structuring of *Mourning Becomes Electra* (1939) to the endearing comedy of *Ah, Wilderness!* (1933). A serious writer, he brought dignity and stature to the theatre irrespective of the form or the subject matter with which he dealt. In addition, he experimented incessantly with masks in *The Great God Brown* (1926), with the techniques of the motion picture on the stage in *The Emperor Jones* (1926), simultaneous action on the stage in *Desire under the Elms* (1924), expressionism in *The Hairy Ape* (1922), and so on almost without end. It will be ironic if, as seems a strong possibility at this writing, Eugene

(Continued on page 27)

Skipper's Scuttlebutt

MARCH MANIA

SKIPPER had the opportunity recently to view 20th Century-Fox's demonstration of CINEMASCOPE 55. Within the past two weeks the first project of this fascinating new filming process, *Carousel*, premiered nationally. I, having seen "rushes" of both *Carousel* and *The King and I*, which were included in CINEMASCOPE 55, immediately resolved not to miss either of these delightful musicals. Never before has any one seen a motion-picture with such focus depth, clarity of the entire screen, and vibrant color.

A great feature of this process is called "audience participation," which creates the sensation of being a part of each scene, be it watching the goings-on at a picnic, finding yourself out of breath from dancing, or wishing desperately for a place to hide so that the young lovers will not be embarrassed by your presence. This is not exaggeration.

I could not help noticing the contrast of every feature CINEMASCOPE 55 offers with the regular CinemaScope photography in *Guys and Dolls*. If you saw this picture, you might have noticed especially the aggravating scenes in which only the first few steps in a walk across the screen were seen clearly. Skipper thought at first that someone had "goofed" by closing the scrim curtain. The problem there, however, proved to be the speed with which the characters crossed the screen; had they walked slower, the tempo would have been lost—the strutting was necessary, but oh, the blur!

Here, as Skipper understands it, is the explanation. (MGM will undoubtedly dislike my using *Guys and Dolls* as an example, but I did enjoy their interpretation of the story.) The process of CINEMASCOPE 55 is simply that actual filming is done in 55 mm.; printing is reduced to 35mm. (Any theatre equipped for CinemaScope and Stereophonic Sound is equipped to run a CINEMASCOPE 55 film; no different or new projector is needed. However, special cameras, at a cost of \$50,000 each, are needed to shoot a CINEMASCOPE 55 picture. Anyone interested in going into the business?) This difference in speeds is slight enough not to slow the tempo of a scene. If (forgive me, MGM) the strutting in *Guys and Dolls* had been filmed in 55mm., the slight change to 35mm. in printing would have kept the tempo of the strutting, but the blur would have been eliminated. Another great difference is clearness of the picture at all edges. Skipper was able to spot where scenes faded in and out by the gradual

darkness and lightness around the edges of the picture. Not so with CINEMASCOPE 55!

Skipper can only recommend that you try the same experiment. Go to see any current CinemaScope production (you'll enjoy *Guys and Dolls*, I'm sure), watch it closely, then see *Carousel*. I am sure you will then resolve not to miss *The King and I* (to be released shortly) or any other motion-picture made in CINEMASCOPE 55.

Oh yes, Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones co-star in *Carousel*; Yul Brynner and Deborah Kerr, in *The King and I*.

Skipper believes the current motto "Movies are better than ever" is now outdated. Thanks to 20th Century-Fox and its CINEMASCOPE 55, the motto should now be "Movie-making is better than ever."

—o—

COMING YOUR WAY

BHOWANI JUNCTION, adventure-drama, Ava Gardner, Stewart Granger. (MGM)

THE BIRDS AND THE BEES, comedy-drama, George Gobel, Mitzi Gaynor, David Niven. (Paramount)

THE BRAVE ONE, drama, Michael Ray, Joi Lansing. (RKO)

THE MAN IN THE GRAY FLANNEL SUIT, drama, Gregory Peck, Jennifer Jones, Frederic March. (20th Century-Fox)

PATTERNS, drama, Van Heflin, Everett Sloane, Ed Begley, Beatrice Straight. (United Artists)

WORLD IN MY CORNER, drama, Audie Murphy, Barbara Rush. (Universal International)

THE KILLER IS LOOSE, drama, Joseph Cotton, Rhonda Fleming, Wendell Corey. (United Artists)

—o—

CHANGING CHANNELS

ABC-TV—MGM *Parade* intends to offer this month different stylization from its previous shows. The March schedule will get off to a good start with *Captains Courageous* in two parts, March 7, 14. The 21st will feature a film biography of actress Elizabeth Taylor; the 28th will be the same of actor Robert Taylor. The MGM *Parade* through March should prove interesting.

NBC-TV—Sir Laurence Olivier's production of *Richard III* will be presented Sunday, March 11, 2:30-5:30 p.m. You lucky color television owners!

NBC-TV—Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Judith Anderson, Claire Bloom, Jack Hawkins and Cyril Ritchard will comprise part of the cast of *Caesar and Cleopatra*, to be presented on *Producers Showcase* March 5.

CBS-TV—Although at this writing plans are only tentative, *Climax* is readying *The Louella Parsons Story* for March 8.

NBC-TV—Watch for Kraft Television Theatre's production of *A Night to Remember*. Having read Walter Lord's story of the sinking of the Titanic in a recent issue of *Reader's Digest*, Skipper can assure your rapt attention to every minute of this astounding story. Recommended? Definitely!!!

NBC-TV—The Friday night series, *Star Stage*, has been living up to its name and evidently plans to continue to do so. Betty Grable will star in *A Little Token* March 9 and Art Carney will become *The Man Who Was Irresistible to Women* March 16. I'll wager this show will be a laugh a minute.

NBC-TV—Skipper has been as happy as the "Andersons" since *Father Knows Best* was switched to the 8:30 Wednesday night time spot. It is an ever enjoyable half-hour when Robert Young and Jane Wyatt bring their TV family into our homes. Nothing exhausting about the Anderson family—a few tugs at the heart-strings, a few hearty laughs and many chuckles throughout—a thorough pleasure to tune in.

Need I remind you to check your local newspapers, calendars and clocks for the day, time and station for your best watching and listening entertainment?

Skipper will be doubly delighted to chat with you next month. Why? It will be Spring!!!

—o—

BROADWAY LINE-UP

ALVIN THEATRE—*No Time for Sergeants*, Andy Griffith. Comedy.

ANTA THEATRE—*Middle of the Night*, Edward G. Robinson. Drama.

BARRYMORE THEATRE—*The Chalk Garden*, Gladys Cooper. Comedy.

BELASCO THEATRE—*Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?*, Henry Morgan, Orson Bean, Jayne Mansfield, Walter Matthau. Comedy.

BOOTH THEATRE—*Time Limit*, Arthur Kennedy. Drama.

BROADHURST THEATRE—*The Desk Set*, Shirley Booth. Comedy.

CORT THEATRE—*Diary of Anne Frank*, Susan Strasberg, Joseph Schildkraut, Gusti Huber. Drama.

46TH STREET THEATRE—*Damn Yankees*, Stephen Douglass, Gwen Verdon. Musical.

GOLDEN THEATRE—*Innkeepers*. Drama.

HELEN HAYES THEATRE—*Tiger at the Gates*, Michael Redgrave. Drama.

HELLINGER THEATRE—*Plain and Fancy*, Evelyn Page. Musical Comedy.

HENRY MILLER THEATRE—*Witness for the Prosecution*, Una O'Connor, Patricia Jessel, Francis L. Sullivan. Mystery.

IMPERIAL THEATRE—*Silk Stockings*, Hildgarde Neff, Don Ameche. Musical.

LONGACRE THEATRE—*The Lark*, Julie Harris. Drama.

LYCEUM THEATRE—*A Hatful of Rain*, Shelley Winters. Drama.

MAJESTIC THEATRE—*Fanny*, Walter Slezak, Ezio Pinza. Musical.

MARTIN BECK THEATRE—*The Teahouse of the August Moon*, John Beal, Eli Wallach. Comedy. (Closes March 24.)

MOROSCO THEATRE—*Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Burl Ives, Barbara Bel Geddes, Mildred Dunnock. Drama.

NATIONAL THEATRE—*Inherit the Wind*, Paul Muni, Ed Begley. Drama.

PLYMOUTH THEATRE—*Janus*, Margaret Sullivan. Comedy.

ROYALE THEATRE—*The Matchmaker*, Ruth Gordon. Comedy.

ST. JAMES THEATRE—*The Pajama Game*, Pat Marshall, John Raitt, Helen Gallagher, Eddie Foy, Jr. Musical.

SHUBERT THEATRE—*Pipe Dream*, Helen Traubel. Musical.

WINTER GARDEN THEATRE—*Bus Stop*, Kim Stanley, Anthony Ross, Elaine Stritch, Dick York. Drama.

THE CURIOUS SAVAGE

GRAMERCY GHOST

DARLING GIRL

A YOUNG LADY OF PROPERTY

I REMEMBER MAMA

(High School Version)

MR. BARRY'S ETCHINGS

SORRY, WRONG NUMBER

MY SISTER EILEEN

RAMSHACKLE INN

JUNIOR MISS

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

YEARS AGO

THE BARRETTS OF WIMPOLE STREET

STAGE DOOR

A YOUNG MAN'S FANCY

WHAT A LIFE

*14 east
38th street
New York
City
16*

THE DANCERS

JENNY KISSED ME

SEND FOR OUR FREE CATALOGUE

*Dramatists
Service
Inc. Play*

SEVEN SISTERS

Adapted by Edith Ellis from Herzog

A charming combination of comedy, farce and romance. The original on which the American version is based is a celebrated Hungarian classic. The adaptation here offered has become a favorite with high school groups that require a large cast of girls.

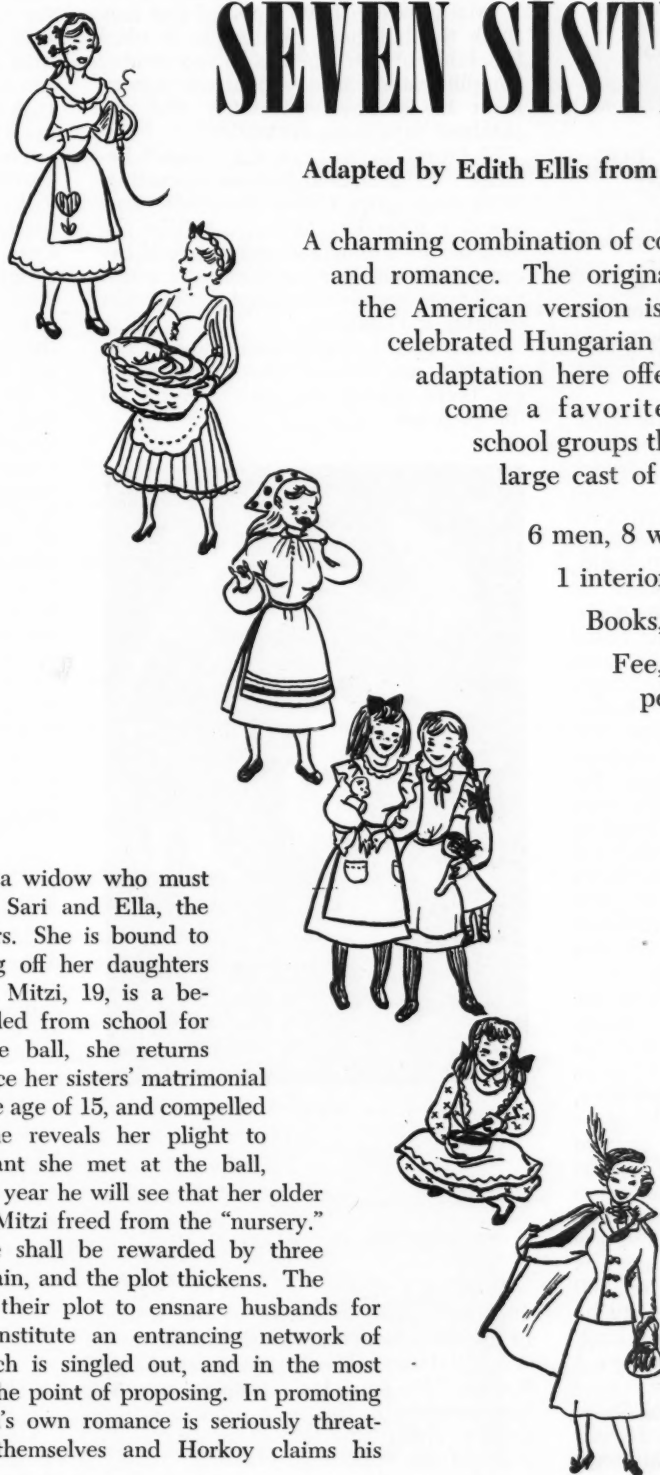
6 men, 8 women

1 interior

Books, 90c

Fee, \$25 a
performance

SEVEN SISTERS is about a widow who must find husbands for Katinka, Sari and Ella, the older of her seven daughters. She is bound to the old custom of marrying off her daughters in the order of their ages. Mitzi, 19, is a bewitching little minx. Expelled from school for running away to a masque ball, she returns home in disgrace. To advance her sisters' matrimonial chances, she is reduced to the age of 15, and compelled to behave accordingly. She reveals her plight to Horkoy, the young lieutenant she met at the ball, and he wagers that within a year he will see that her older sisters are married off, and Mitzi freed from the "nursery." But when that happens he shall be rewarded by three kisses. They make the bargain, and the plot thickens. The intrigues they resort to in their plot to ensnare husbands for Katinka, Sari and Ella constitute an entrancing network of comedy; a husband for each is singled out, and in the most entertaining fashion led to the point of proposing. In promoting her sisters' happiness, Mitzi's own romance is seriously threatened, but matters adjust themselves and Horkoy claims his reward.





THE "ORIGINAL" SCRIPT FOR CHILDREN'S THEATRE

CHILDREN'S Theatre is an inspiration to original, creative work in many areas: directing, sets, costumes, makeup—and script. In the following article we shall hear from four of our Thespian troupes in connection with their experience with "original" scripts.

TROUPE 412, CONEMAUGH TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL, DAVIDSVILLE, PA.

Mrs. Hilda A. Kring, sponsor of Troupe 412, reports in a vivid, exciting account her experience with "creating" scripts for Children's Theatre. "I teach eleventh-grade English, and for one of its units, I worked up an Americana brochure. As an added interest, I selected about sixteen students to produce a playlet based on a folklore character to the area grade children. The first of these scripts was written by a student, Pat Shaffer, a former Thespian. The script was *Johnny Applesseed* for which the student-author relied heavily on recordings. Because the children received this play so well and because National Thespians keep plugging children's plays, I decided that my troupe should do a children's play instead of their usual three-act play. This would thus seem to give variation to our annual program since we also produce a senior and junior play.

"Last spring, April 1955, I wrote my version of *Snow White* without consulting any sources because we had no money for royalty and because I like to dabble in creative work. Furthermore, I knew that most commercial children's plays run from one-and-a-half to two hours, which I felt was too long for the attention span of a child. I decided upon a half-hour production, reasoning that many television shows for children are about that length. The production was most successful, playing to over 700 children in a rural area, who had to be transported by bus. All summer long, reports came that children were playing *Snow White*.

"Encouraged by the success of *Snow White*, in the fall of 1955 I wrote *Hansel and Gretel* for an October Children's Theatre production. Since I had read both of these stories when I was a little girl in Germany, I did not reread the tales, just used them from memory. In *Hansel and Gretel*, I also used the little dances I had learned in first grade in Germany, accompanied by recordings of

Humperdinck's music. One liberty that I took with the original Grimm tale was in the scene where Hansel and Gretel become frightened as it grows dark. I had them decide to say "Now I lay me down to sleep" to allay their fears.

"Many parents have reported that they think the half-hour production is ideal for children; everyone has had something complimentary to say about our experiment in Children's Theatre; and the children have been enthralled.

"I expect to continue this project because I find it challenging and rewarding. With each script I learn something new—and I have lots to learn. I like the idea of developing the script myself because I am not hampered and get a real thrill from creative accomplishment that delights the children."

Note: Mrs. Kring generously offers her scripts to any troupes who would like to use them, merely for author credit on the program.



Hansel and Gretel, Troupe 412, Conemaugh Twp. High School, Davidsville, Pa. Hilda A. Kring, Sponsor.

TROUPE 162, WYANDOTTE HIGH SCHOOL, KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

William J. Knapp, sponsor of Troupe 162, with rare sensitivity to the needs of the child audience, reports on his work with Children's Theatre in Kansas City, Kansas. He and his Thespian troupe have worked in this area for five years during which time they have produced some of the traditional children's plays. However, in deference to the particular needs of the audiences for which they are producing plays, Mr. Knapp has found writing his own scripts most satisfactory. He says, "The Civic organization each year sponsors a big Christmas party for the underprivileged children of

Kansas City. These children are transported to our school by bus. . . . We have to guard the type of production because these children should not be shown anything of sadness. About the only way that I could find what I needed to fit the situation (having studied it by the trial and error method) was to write my own plays. They must be light, full of fun and color; and they must not promise that Christmas will bring the children everything they want."

The play upon which Mr. Knapp specifically reported was *The Mixed-Up Talents*, a forty-minute production, playing to an audience of nearly 700 children from seven to twelve years old. In this script, he placed especial interest on the story line, which emphasized the incentive to go ahead in life; and he enlivened the production with appropriate singing and dancing.

Of the Children's Play project in general, Mr. Knapp says that it is a wonderful experience for high school producers and a great challenge to the imagination. He expects to continue this type of production every year because, as he writes with conviction, "My Thespians would rather work with this type of play than any other. They like to be in children's costumes and like to see the eyes of the poor children light up in merriment,—and you can see that I would rather produce this type of play myself because I really know the needs of these children." . . . It is evident that Children's Theatre in Kansas City, Kansas, is in safe hands.

TROUPE 413, SHAWNEE-MISSION HIGH SCHOOL, MERRIAM, KANSAS

Miss Virnelle Jones, sponsor of Troupe 413, writes of a somewhat different type of experience with an original script for children with high school producers. After working most successfully at summer camp with two original scripts for children which Miss Jones was developing as a master's thesis, she decided to produce the third script, *The Real Princess*, with members of Troupe 413. . . . In recognition of the need for more and better scripts for children's plays, Miss Jones says, "I certainly would encourage anyone with any aptitude to try writing for children, for I have found that too many published works of this nature were written by adults who do not understand children. Their plays were written for adults to present for youngsters without real insight into the needs and responses of children."

TROUPE 1089, PLEASANTON HIGH SCHOOL, PLEASANTON, TEXAS

Mrs. W. J. Everitt, sponsor, and Harriett Peel, Vice-President of Troupe 1089, both write enthusiastically about their production last year of *Sleeping Beauty* from an original adaptation by Jack Cogdill, director of Speech at Panhandle A. and M. College, Goodwell, Oklahoma. (Incidentally, Mr. Cogdill has had a great deal of experience in

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Marco Polo
The Prince and the Pauper
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Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves
Alice in Wonderland
Cinderella
The Elves and the Shoemaker
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Jack and the Beanstalk
King Midas and the Golden Touch
The Land of the Dragon
Little Red Riding Hood
Peter Peter, Pumpkin Eater
Pinocchio
The Plain Princess
Prince Fairyfoot
Puss in Boots
Rumpelstiltskin
Simple Simon
The Sleeping Beauty
Snow White and Rose Red
The Three Bears
The Wonderful Tang

CHRISTMAS PLAYS

The Christmas Nightingale
A Christmas Carol

PLAYS OF POPULAR STORIES

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Hans Brinker and the Silver Skates
Hansel and Gretel
Heidi
Hiawatha
Huckleberry Finn
Little Women
Oliver Twist
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Robin Hood
Robinson Crusoe
The Sandalwood Box
Tom Sawyer
Treasure Island

The plays listed above will be found fully described and illustrated in our catalogue

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CLOVERLOT

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producing plays for children.) Mrs. Everitt, who reports the production of children's plays since 1952, especially recommends Mr. Cogdill's adaptation of *Sleeping Beauty* since it plays for only one hour, and strongly emphasizes the element of fantasy implicit in the original story. She further cites many opportunities for vivid pantomime provided by the script.

As to the value of Children's Theatre for high school producers, Mrs. Everitt

says, "I feel that it is one of the best vehicles for creating interest in dramatics as well as for gaining dramatic experience. . . . I use a Children's Theatre production each year as my first presentation because I find that pupils are able to lose self-consciousness quicker in the exaggerated acting required in children's plays than in any other type of production." Troupe 1089 has evidently done its work well in this area because Mrs. Everitt says that last year their high

school year book used the theme of fairy tales, which was an outgrowth of the work and interest in Children's Theatre.

Harriett Peel, VP of Troupe 1089, underwrites her sponsor's enthusiasm for Children's Theatre when she says, "When our first performance was over and we realized that our audience of little children had been perfectly attentive and appreciative throughout the play, we felt happy that we had really accomplished a 'job well done.'"

It would seem evident from these reports on the use of "Original" scripts for Children's Theatre that (1) there may be many different types of motivation for this effort and (2) the very creative nature of plays for children is a challenge and inspiration to script writing to suit the specific needs of the producing group and audience.

We are grateful to Thespian sponsors and members who share their experiences with all of us and invite all sponsors to let us hear about their work in Children's Theatre. The National Thespian Society firmly believes in Theatre for Children as a really worth-while educational experience for both participants and audience. Here is a "live" medium of entertainment welcomed by the faculty, by the administration and most important by the community. All children from six to sixty love "show business."



Another scene from Troupe 412's production of *Hansel and Gretel*.



Down to Earth, Troupe 1147, Flagstaff, Arizona, High School, Dorothy K. Brierley, Sponsor.

BLACKOUTS OF '53

Lake Washington Sr. High School, Kirkland, Wn.

MOBILE scenery provided an interesting drawing card in the Lake Washington High School's *Blackouts of '53*. This annual variety show was presented by Troupe 274. Miss Liberty, her trip to New York, and her coronation acted as continuity for the many different acts which featured dancers, musicians, and comedians.

A life-sized Pullman rear platform was built to end Act I and start Miss Liberty's trip to New York. Surprised ah's came from the audience when, to the toot of whistles and the hiss of steam, the platform moved upstage and the curtains closed. Projected scenery and black light were two other features which gave the *Blackouts* an animated effect.

Parts in acts or continuity were open

to all students in the school. The rapid change from the serious songs to light comedy to dance routines, coupled with the story of Miss Liberty, kept audience interest at a high peak.

Lithographed programs with a quantity of pictures were used for the first time. The success of their sales added profits to the *Blackout's* account.

Miss Liberty's visits around New York took her to Central Park where the Rain Drops and the Rainbow Girls gave weather-minded performances. Coney Island showed off its lifeguards and bathing beauties. A New York night club, the tourists' mecca, ended the tour.

Curtain number for the variety show was set in the night club where Miss Liberty was crowned and the full cast of 200 sang "Where, But in America" while black light flashed across an illuminated Statue of Liberty. Members



Blackouts of '53, Troupe 274, Lake Washington Sr. High School, Kirkland, Wash., Marianne Cadle, Sponsor.

PLAYS OF THE MONTH

Edited By EARL BLANK

of the cast held individual stars which also reflected the light. This patriotic number brought to a close another successful Thespian production, *Blackouts of '53*.

PETER CLARKE
President, Troupe 274

DOWN TO EARTH

Flagstaff, Arizona, High School

THE PRODUCTION of Bettye Knappe's *Down to Earth* was relatively simple, yet so rewarding in its results, that this comedy-fantasy will be long remembered as one of our best by both the participants and the audience.

In the play two angels and a heavenly "hitchhiker" come down to earth for the purpose of changing the lives of two mortals. The "hitchhiker," Pilone, is not yet an angel, but he "earns his wings" and becomes a frolicking, mischievous, full-fledged angel before the final curtain.

For the prologue, in which the angels are seen coming to earth, we created a cloud effect with chicken wire and paper napkins, concealing electric fans behind the clouds so that the filmy, cheese-cloth costumes of the angels would move as if in a breeze. The cloud effect and angels were placed in front of a blue "speaker's curtain," behind which the scene for the rest of the play was already set up. From off-stage came the strains of ethereal music, "Prelude to Act III of Lohengrin," playing softly under the conversation of the angels. A blue flood was the only light. The illusion was perfect!

Down to Earth is wonderfully different from most high school plays. It offers a wide range of characterizations that can be handled successfully by high school students. Yet each is difficult enough to offer a challenge to any young person interested in drama. Special commendation was given to our young actors who played Augusta Applegate, an octogenarian; Pilone, the heavenly "hitchhiker"; and Diana Clump, the emotional maid. All, however, played their roles with delicacy and finesse.

All who participated and all who watched the performance agreed that *Down to Earth* is a delightful comedy-fantasy that should not be missed by any high school drama group.

DOROTHY KEMBLE BRIERLEY
Sponsor, Troupe 1147

PUBLISHERS

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Down to Earth, Row, Peterson & Co., Evanston, Ill.
Meet Corliss Archer, Dramatic Publishing Co., Chicago, Ill.

**DOWN TO EARTH
BLACKOUTS OF '53
FOLLOW THE DREAM
MEET CORLISS ARCHER**

FOLLOW THE DREAM

Central High School, Oklahoma City, Okla.

YOU CAN'T beat the team of Ryerson and Miller. Miss Ryerson has given us such splendid high school plays as *June Mad* and *Ever since Eve*. Alice Duerr Miller wrote that former best-seller, *White Cliffs of Dover*. These two authors have written a two-act comedy, *Follow the Dream*, that can be played against curtains or screens. Though it has twelve scenes we were able to stage it with a minimum of effort for a maximum of effects. The only basic prop we had to have was a practical window that could be crawled in and out of during the play. With the cooperation of your local telephone company for a phone booth, a magazine rack from the drug-store, a few palms from the florist and some "stained glass windows" made by your art department, you're "set." We have never given a play that got so many students and departments into the act. It became a school project rather than a junior class play.

The plot tells of a young girl whose life has been divided between North and South America. The first scene starts the day of her wedding when she is worried about her choice of a bridegroom. In the following scenes she relives her school life and love story. She is torn between two loves—a young athlete and a young South American boy from Peru whom she meets in high school in America. The audience doesn't know which she chooses until the last minute of the play. The suspense is effective and we used background music to enhance the effect to good advantage.

It is an ideal play for juniors and gives nineteen a chance to act as well as a



Follow the Dream, Troupe 822, Central High School, Oklahoma City, Okla., Maybelle Conger, Sponsor.

stage crew that is vitally important to your scene shifts. The girls loved wearing bridesmaids' dresses, and a wedding is always fun for teen-agers. It is interesting to note that this play was first produced by the Miami Edison Thespian Society Troupe 8 for a Thespian conference in 1951.

From the standpoint of a director who has no set to work with it was a Godsend. I recommend it heartily as a wholesome, fresh, gay evening's entertainment.

MAYBELLE CONGER
Sponsor, Troupe 822

MEET CORLISS ARCHER

Tahlequah, Oklahoma, Senior High School

OUR JUNIOR class received compliments galore following its production of *Meet Corliss Archer*. The play was delightful to direct. It lends itself perfectly to high school production. Before we finished the script, we knew that we had a success. It has all the ingredients of a good play.

Meet Corliss Archer is real, human, and wholesome—nothing needs to be cut.

It is a good length and offers no particular staging problems. With the exception of Cousin Agnes, we cast the adults as youngish, to avoid the problem of making young persons look old. We knew that we had available a perfect Dexter and a delightful Corliss. This is important as their personalities stand out during the entire play. Care should be taken in the selection of Mr. Archer because much of the comedy depends upon the successful interpretation of his role. Cousin Agnes also is responsible for a large share of the laughs.

For the one set interior we used a simple box set with pointed wood facing, made by our stage-craft class. The only special lighting was a spot for Corliss and Dexter in the third act. Cousin Agnes needs a few eccentric touches; otherwise the costuming is simple. We used light make-up for the juveniles; a few wrinkles and a touch of grey hair for the adults. We did not need to sell the story of this widely known play.

MARY UPDEGRAFF
Sponsor, Troupe 836



Meet Corliss Archer, Troupe 836, Tahlequah, Okla., Sr. High School, Mary Updegraff, Sponsor.



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Troupe 223, Bradley-Bourbonnais H. S., Bradley, Ill., Agnes Stelter, Sponsor.

Thespian Chatter

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Troupe 753

This past year was really a great one for our drama department. The dramatics club launched things at full speed when they produced the fall play, *Nine Girls*. It was a tremendous success, and we were all so very proud. At Christmas the club put on a talent show for the school, which was also a success. In March the Northern Virginia Play Festival was held, and our entry, *Fumed Oak*, received a superior rating. Also in March our spring production took place, consisting of four one-acts: *Sorry, Wrong Number*, *Fumed Oak*, *How to Propose*, and *The Hitch-Hiker*. Again a success! The dramatics club really got on the ball in April by beginning a drama workshop for interested students. As a fit closing for the year the club's final meeting was devoted to three one-acts presented to the school. Our Thespian troupe was active overseeing dramatics club activities, and gaining many new members.

All our productions were student-acted, directed, and in some cases, written. We feel triumphant over this past year and feel sure that next year will equal if not excel it.—Linda Klaveness, Scribe.

—O—

SCIO, OHIO

Troupe 1375

May 11 was the first birthday of Troupe 1375. We have grown and prospered, and we intend to keep to the standards of excellence set for us by this past year's activities.

November 12 saw the opening production of three one-act plays: *So Wonderful in White*, *Albuquerque Ten Minutes*, and the famous *The Valiant*. Twenty-four new members were initiated that night, after production, before an audience of nearly 400, and honorary membership was conferred on Edward L. Cavitt, Editor of THE SCIO HERALD, our local newspaper. Mr. Cavitt has long been a generous supporter of our high school dramatics arts program.

The senior class put a number of Thespians to serious work in Austin Strong's great play, *Seventh Heaven*, produced on March 24 and 25. Ten of the fifteen members of the cast were Thespians, and after production, five other high school students were eligible for initiation on May 10.

Seventh Heaven was an exciting experience. We were honored by the presence of Mr. and Mrs. Leon C. Miller for our opening night's

performance. You may imagine the state of nerves backstage! But Mr. and Mrs. Miller proved to be enthusiastic and gracious people, the production surpassed our highest hopes, and it was quite an evening! Our audience was the biggest yet—1008 paid admissions in two performances. We're aiming for 1100 next year. That's the total population of Scio!

Five Thespians and our Sponsor attended the Southeastern Area Conference at Bridgeport in February. Andrew Hobart, Sponsor of Bridgeport High School Troupe 437, came to Scio to see *Seventh Heaven* in March. On March 12 we took a cutting from *Seventh Heaven* to Muskingum College to compete in the Ohio High School Drama and Poetry Reading Contest. We saw some excellent performances, and we learned something about the meaning of the lines in the Thespian pledge: "I shall accept criticisms, disappointments, and promotions in the spirit of true humility and obedience. . . ."

Five senior Thespians and the Troupe Sponsor saw some shows in New York in June: notably the musical version of *Seventh Heaven*, *Bad Seed*, and a revival of *Guys and Dolls*. During the year our Thespians regularly attend the Canton Players Guild productions, directed by Jack Looker, who has been helpful to us from time to time. This year we saw *Annie Get Your Gun*, *The Moon Is Blue*, *Stalag 17*, and *Sabrina Fair*. We saw *Death Takes a Holiday* at Cadiz High School and *Night of January 16th* at Uhrichsville High School.

On May 10 we initiated five members and conferred three honorary memberships on high school faculty members.

We're still the only Thespian Troupe in Harrison County. . . . We have only 147 students in our high school, upper four years, and we know that size should not keep a school from having fine plays well done. . . . We hope more schools in our area will discover that Thespian membership is one of the best incentives to a good dramatic arts program.—David Wiggins, Scribe.

—O—

ELIZABETH, PA.

Troupe 1391

Troupe 1391 raised the curtain for a year of successful activities with the production of a half-hour television show over WQED, the education station in Pittsburgh. Our sponsor, Dorthie Kogelman, directed the entire show, and the Thespians demonstrated make-up tech-



Hay Fever, Troupe 1371, East H. S., Denver, Colo., Margaret M. Smith, Sponsor.

niques and performed the "witches' scene" from *Macbeth*. Our next production was *Good-bye to the Clown*, presented during National Education Week open house at the high school. Our Christmas show included *The Holy Search* and *The Christmas That Bounced*. The climax of our dramatic arts program was our senior class play, *Heaven Can Wait*, which drew record-breaking crowds and highly favorable comments. Twice during the year we "tapped" initiates during student assemblies, and followed these tap services with formal initiations. We presented our "Best Thespian," Pete Vaira, a Thespian pin, and installed our 1955-56 officers at a banquet honoring graduating Thespians. With this event, the curtain fell on Troupe 1391 for 1954-55 school term—*Jack Price, Secretary*.

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An extraordinary courtroom drama in three acts by Ayn Rand. For 10W, 11M. Was Bjorne Faulkner killed on the night of January 16th, or is he still alive when Karen Andre is put on trial for his murder? Only the jury, selected from the audience, can supply the answer and determine the ending of this popular and successful play. Books, 90¢. Director's Manuscript. Royalty, \$25.

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A comedy in three acts by Alice Gerstenberg. For 10W. Miss Gerstenberg is adept at writing plays for women only and good full length ones are not easy to find. This one will provide sparkling entertainment for girls' schools and colleges. Books, 90¢. Royalty, \$25.

The Swan

A full length romance by Ferenc Molnar of high dramatic and literary quality. For 9W, 9M and extras. Its sly humor and wistful romance give it an appeal to high school or little theatre audiences alike. Has been produced by all-girl casts. Books, \$1.25. Director's Manuscript. Royalty, \$25.

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PAMPA, TEXAS

Troupe 1010, in connection with the dramatics department of Pampa High School, had a very successful season this year. The senior class play, *The Curious Savage*, received wide acclaim and played to full houses during its two nights' run. The juniors followed with a hit production of *Remember the Day*. Thespians sponsored a "play night," which brought successful presentations of *Mind-Set*, *Balcony Scene*, and *The Owl and Two Young Men*. The children's theatre play, *The Clown Who Ran Away*, played to an audience of Pampa and neighboring city children. Most widely acclaimed was the all-school play, *Angel Street*, which consisted of an all-Thespian cast. It placed first at both district and regional contests. We presented several special programs

Troupe 1010

for school, social, civic, and church groups this year, and gave a trophy to the school in honor of our winning play cast. Fourteen members were initiated.—*Charlotte Hoggatt, Member*.

—O—

JOLIET, ILLINOIS

Troupe 1305

This year's spotlights first focused on a unique presentation of *Overtones*, stylized with dance movements, black eye, and two huge pillows by four dance major Thespians. "Unusual! Fascinating!" were the comments of the 800 teachers of the conference audience.

Approximately 7,000 seats were filled for this year's productions which included two three-act plays, a program of one-acts, an operetta, and an original musical. Contests and civic club programs also occupied tireless Thespians.

Vice president and Best Thespian John Ewing was placed on the All-State Cast of the Illinois Drama Festival for two years in succession for his roles in last year's *Hello Out There*, which won first place, and this year's *As I Remember You*, which placed second. Cast members, Barbara Fredrickson, Connie Cowing, and Martie Rudman, also received all state cast ratings this year.

Thespian activities came to a climax with a banquet for members, friends, and alumni.—*Dom Rainbo, President*.

—O—

DICKSON, TENNESSEE

Troupe 1511

Troupe 1511 was organized early this spring through the efforts of a few students and teachers. Mrs. Floyd Williams and Mrs. Claude Martin were chosen to guide the troupe through the coming year. The Speech class presented the play, *Seventeenth Summer*, during the month of December. The play met with good response. The junior class went all out to put over their annual play. This year *Here Come the Brides* was presented. One of the largest crowds in many years attended. One week later a repeat performance was presented in near-by Stayton. The senior class also met with success when they presented *Desperate Ambrose*. Near the end of the year we had our first Thespian Initiation. Seventeen students comprised the charter members.—*David Walker, President*.

—O—

MORRISON, ILLINOIS

Troupe 1060

The dramatic groups of Morrison Community High School proudly accepted the congratulations from their adviser, Alberta Jackson, their fellow students, the faculty, and the community for their outstanding achievements in 1954-55. Setting their talent to work, the juniors started the string of successes with *Ramshackle Inn*. The mystery farce held all in shivers and stitches. Our annual Play Nite brought the presentations of *Feudin' Mountain Boys*, *Lady of the Market Place*, and *The Roman Kid*. The hillbilly comedy, Christmas story, and sports story about Rome, once again gave the audience the night of variety they had anticipated. The seniors brought the year's major productions to an end with the presentation of *Good News*. The musical comedy, the first ever attempted, left the perfect finishing touches on a very successful year.

For outstanding work in the school year's productions, as well as skits for assemblies and community gatherings, nineteen new initiates received the honor of Thespian.—*Karen Edlund, President*.

—O—

PORTSMOUTH, VIRGINIA

Troupe 1238

One of the highlights of our year was the installation of a new Thespian Troupe at our neighboring Cradock High School. Other outstanding events included the following: the appearance of a lengthy, feature article, complete with pictures, concerning our Troupe's activities, in the Sunday edition of one of our local papers; a student ticket selling campaign

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a comedy by Alex Alexander. 4 m, 6 w.

If it hadn't been that Margo was a pretender, things might have gone along smoothly in the Burgoyne household. Margo was long on social ambitions but short on cash. Trying to keep "in the swim" she nearly drowned under one pretense after another. A tower of white lies started to build and the only way Margo can get back in the right financial brackets is to marry her children off to wealth. All this develops into a merry-go-round of activity that picks up speed as one complication after another piles up.

YOU HEARD ME!

a farce by Lynn Bowie. 5 m, 8 w.

This fast-paced farce produces laughs with the speed of a roller coaster! Timid Lorenzo Meek meets attractive Susan Stover. They become engaged and plans are being made for an early marriage. After an audition, Lorenzo becomes an overnight hit on TV. Unknown to Lorenzo or anybody in his immediate circle, there is a criminal named Tiger Manson who is the very image of Lorenzo. After a series of hilarious misadventures Lorenzo is united with Susan and the play ends happily.

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PLAYS

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for the Barter Theatre plays, sponsored locally by the Jaycees; a trip to Williamsburg to see the William and Mary Theatre's production of *Twelfth Night*; the sponsoring of *The Boor*, presented by the Longwood College Players of Farmville, Virginia; and the presentation of three three-act plays and three one-act plays, one of which, *Strange Road*, received top honors in both the District and State One-Act Play Festivals.

A successful year's activities were concluded on June 10, when the Third Anniversary Banquet was held, complete with birthday cake with three candles on it.—*Jacque Bonney, Secretary.*

—0—

SPOKANE, WASHINGTON Troupe 1499

Troupe 1499 was officially installed when Troupe 1064 of Rogers High School in Spokane performed the impressive candlelight ceremony for us. The dramatics class presented a clever pantomime: *Cakes for the Queen*.

Our first production this year was *The Plain Princess*, a children's play. The players trouped one hundred miles away for one performance, besides having given eight performances in Spokane.

The all-school play was *Dirty Work at the Crossroads*, an old-time melodrama. Programs one and one-half feet long placed us in the 1890 atmosphere. A piano player plunked dainty melodies when the heroine stepped on stage and crashed brassy chords when the villain appeared.

We held a theatre party this August at Spokane's new Coliseum.—*Katherine Murray, Scribe.*

—0—

NORTH PLAINFIELD, N. J. Troupe 1309

The Merry Marionettes' Scrapbook bulges with pictures and programs from this year's dramatic activities. First snaps are of *The Song of Bernadette*, a wonderfully successful production, which had two repeat performances and was viewed by almost 1800. Club members enthusiastically made costumes and properties; most realistic of all was the stove concocted from a huge cardboard carton.

Beautiful pictures of the unusual Nativity scene from our Christmas play, *In the Light of the Star*, remind us of the audience's delight in this charming play. One member of the audience sent us the program annotated with her reactions to the cast and their performance. Such comments as "An utterly delightful showing to world-weary people" and "Did you know you could hear a pin drop in the audience for this entire performance?" meant more than an Oscar to club members.

Scrapbook pages mirror characters from the New Testament in scenes from *Pilate and the Cross*. This Passion play with its many male roles was the usual challenge in our all-girls' academy (Mt. St. Mary's).

The Musicales and Class Night programs reflect the lighter and more musical side of our dramatic activities. But pictures and programs

can only partially recall the fun, work, and satisfaction of our performances. On "our side of the footlights" we eagerly anticipate a new year of dramatics.—*Mimi Medinger, Scribe.*

—0—

HIGHLAND PARK, MICHIGAN Troupe 518

Last spring a new program was started at the Highland Park High School. An exploratory program now gives all ninth graders the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of dramatics in a ten weeks' course. Dramatics one and two are offered in the higher grades for those interested in a continuation of study in dramatic arts.

For those interested in the technical end of show business, a stage class is offered. The students in this class make up the very efficient stage crews for all our productions. This spring they created a modern set for *Blithe Spirit* that drew much praise from all who saw it. The instructors in these new courses are Mary Van Noy Fraser and Mack Palmer.

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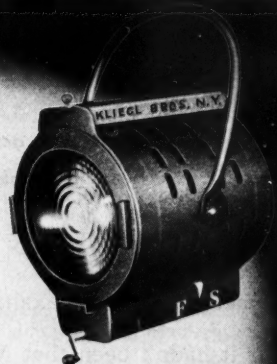
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In a recent ceremony, Janet Poe, a graduate of this June, was awarded her fifth Thespian star. This is an achievement never before equalled in the history of Highland Park.—Art Baum, President.

—O—

CHARLESTON, WEST VIRGINIA Troupe 121

The dramatics department of Stonewall Jackson High School was kept very busy during the school year 1954-55. The first production of the year was the junior class play, *The Tower Room Mystery*, presented on November 19 and directed by Jean D. Bourne. *Down*



All My Sons, Troupe 871, Palestine, Texas, High School, E. Wayne Craddock, Sponsor.

in the Valley, a one-act operetta, presented on December 3 was directed by Eleanor Thomason, assisted by Ralph B. Currey. On February 17 we had a new experience when the A-B-C of drama was introduced to our school. A is for Stuart P. Armstrong, B is for Jean D. Bourne, and C is for Ralph B. Currey. These three teachers directed the Thespian-Troupers in the following one-act plays: *The Happy Journey*, *Adam's Rib Hurts*, and *Which Is the Way to Boston?* Our activities were concluded for the year after the senior class presented *Seventeenth Summer* on April 29, directed by Ralph B. Currey.

A group of our students presented *The Point of Beginning* on May 6 at a program sponsored by the Charleston Council of Churches. This play was directed by a student, Barbara Waggy, assisted by the sponsor.

To put a final touch to a wonderful year in our dramatics department, our troupe held a very colorful and impressive initiation ceremony at Central Methodist Church at which time we initiated seventeen new members into the society.—Edward Bacheldes, President.

—O—

HIGHLAND PARK, N. J. Troupe 805

Troupe 805 actively participated in the senior play, *January Thaw*, last November. Many of the Thespians worked with the junior dramatic club last year, and in May the two groups presented *Our Town*. We enjoyed the Broadway production of *Teahouse of the August Moon*. Roberta Howard, junior, was hostess of the annual Thespian party for the graduating Thespians. Leading up to the awarding of the Oscar to the Best Thespian of the year, our sponsor facetiously presented tiny dolls to each senior referring to some *faux pas* during their rehearsals over their four years.—Joyce Grant, Secretary.

—O—

OGDEN, IOWA Troupe 927

It's been a busy year for this new Thespian troupe. Our charter was formally presented in

January. Among the things accomplished was the presentation of the operetta, *Jerry of Jericho Road*, *Our Town*, three one-act plays, trips to Des Moines, Ames, and Iowa City to see professional and college productions.

A banquet was held which included the installation of new members, election of new officers. Among the clicking of cameras and flashing bulbs "Oscars" were awarded to the best actors and actresses of the year's productions.

Our plans for this year include construction of a puppet theatre, presentation of several different types of plays through different media, and several planned visits to other theatres.

With only one semester on our high school campus we saw an increased interest in drama. Thespians has become the most sought after club in school. Sponsors for this troupe are Lyla Meade and Louis Crouch.—Gary Alton, Scribe.

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THEATRE TODAY

(Continued from page 14)

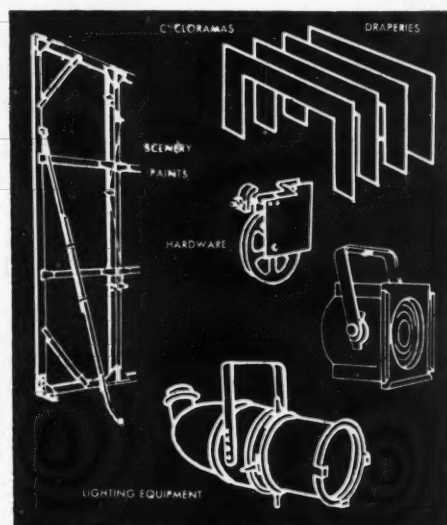
O'Neill's greatest plays are not these pretentious experiments but his hauntingly beautiful and realistic one-act dramas of the sea. Written early in his career for the Provincetown Players, which later became the enormously successful Theatre Guild, such plays as *The Moon of the Caribbees*, *Bound East for Cardiff*, and *The Long Voyage Home*, all part of a series dealing with life aboard the S. S. Glencairn, are touching and effective dramatizations of O'Neill's own experience as a sailor in the merchant marine. It is too early, however, to pass complete judgment on the works of this giant among American dramatists.

Thornton Wilder (1897-) has written at least two plays of importance. One is *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1946), which is a panorama of man's history from the Ice Age to the present. With a wonderful sense of humor and of the symbolic, Wilder has here created an important drama, which is quite significant in its reflections and in its insights. His other important play is the extremely familiar *Our Town* (1938). Some critics have snubbed the play as being overly sentimental. This may well be true, but those same critics overlook the great and unequivocal truths that are contained in this deceptively simple drama. Borrowing heavily from the techniques of Meyerhold and the expressionists, Wilder has in *Our Town* created a singularly "realistic" play in that it rests so closely to the human experience. *Our Town* may well be the greatest American drama of our time, and there is still hope that Wilder will yet write, in his careful and sincere fashion, more great plays for the theatre.

Of the contemporary playwrights, two are outstanding: Tennessee Williams and Arthur Miller. Williams is a romanticist and Miller a realist, but they share a common denominator in the explosive material and the sense of frustration with which they both deal. Williams' best known works are in actuality a trilogy dealing with southern womanhood at three different stages of deterioration: *Summer and Smoke*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, and *The Glass Menagerie*. Of the three, the last is probably most notable for its fine poetic insights and general sense of hopelessness, exemplified by the closing lines of the play: "Blow out your candles, Laura, for nowadays the world is lit by lightning." Temporarily abandoning romanticism in favor of expressionism in *Camino Real*, Williams was more confusing than he was successful. But with his current play *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, he has probably written his finest play to date. Arthur Miller, on the other hand, has not been nearly so prolific nor has he indicated any inclination to the romantic mode. At the height of World War II, he bitterly lashed out at shoddy war profiteers in *All My Sons*. In his

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Death of a Salesman, which has been variously acclaimed as the "greatest American tragedy" and a "sentimental snivel," he attempted to portray the tragedy of the common man; my own feeling is that he was not successful inasmuch Willie Loman deserves no pity nor does his story produce any of the ennoblement which is essential to tragedy. Miller's latest drama, however, is *The Crucible*, which is a powerful exploration of the injustices, the bigotries, and the superstitions as well as the human passions and wills at conflict during the Salem witch hunts. Containing an important and clear warning for our own time, *The Crucible* is a mature drama, which not only has overcome the defects and weaknesses of his earlier plays but has placed Miller in the forefront of modern theatre writers.

In addition to writers, the American theatre has been rich in far-sighted producing groups like the Theatre Guild and the now defunct Group Theatre; in creative directors like Guthrie McClintock, Elia Kazan, Margaret Webster, and George Abbott; and in world-leading designers like Robert Edmond Jones, Lee Simonson and Jo Mielziner. The talents of these artists and craftsmen in the theatre have made it technically one of the most proficient and the most imaginative in the world today. Largely centered in New York and Hollywood, its influence may be observed throughout the country in the work of amateur, college and high school theatres. This

combination of many talents is no better evidenced than in the great advances made recently in the American musical comedy form. Rogers' and Hammerstein's *Oklahoma!*, for better or worse, has completely revamped the style of musical comedy presentation. Not only their own success (*South Pacific*, *Allegro*, *Me and Juliet*, *The King and I*), but the whole concept of story and musical unity blended completely with the arts of the director, the singer, the designer, the choreographer, and the lighting technician has been changed.

Finally, the American theatre is, more than any other single element, its actors and its actresses. Katherine Cornell, Tallulah Bankhead, Helen Hayes, Julie Harris, Lynne Fontanne, Mary Martin, and Judith Anderson are but a few. Each theatre-goer has one he admires the most. My own selection would be Judith Anderson for her performance in *Medea*, but a close second would be the late Laurette Taylor for her "Amanda" in *The Glass Menagerie*. We have not always been so fortunate in actors. But Henry Fonda, Paul Muni, Jose Ferrer, Alfred Lunt, and the talented newcomer Marlon Brando again are but a selected (admittedly on a bias) few of the many talented performers.

The state of the American theatre in mid-century is an encouraging one. The perennial "invalid" is, after all, a bouncing, energetic "brat" with a future which may well be almost unlimited. It will be exciting to wait and see.

DIRECTING

(Continued from page 13)

audience uses its imagination or an extension of the imagination to supply the absent units. The use of imagination is one of the vital factors in the presentation of the living theatre. Too many specific units will tend to inhibit rather than to stimulate the imagination.

To the director who is hesitant in selecting a play for arena production because of the setting, these simple and obvious methods of adapting the setting may prove helpful. Incidentally, *The Silver Cord* and *The Petrified Forest* were staged in the recreation room of the university union building—a room which was used during the day by other activities. Therefore the entire setting, including the lights which were mounted on four light poles, had to be moved after each performance and re-set the next evening. Due to the simplicity of the setting, however, this operation took less than thirty minutes.

In the illustration one may note that the furniture arrangement enables the actor when seated to face at sometime or other during the performance all portions of the audience. Probably, the problem of permitting the audience to see the actor's face or at least assume that he is seeing it is a major one for the director in the round. The director should view his production from all sides of the acting area during the rehearsal

period. A footstool or hassock or even a small coffee table, such as the circular table in *The Silver Cord*, which can be easily moved, will offer a variety of seated positions and still enable the audience to see the actors' faces during the play.

As an example of adapting a different type of setting to arena staging, the illustration of Robert E. Sherwood's *The Petrified Forest* depicts a restaurant setting with a cashier's counter constructed with open shelves and a special stand for the cash register so that the audience had an unobstructed view of the play.

Simplicity of setting is not the only factor to be observed in selecting the play. Due to the proximity of the audi-

ence to the players and the acting area, the director will find that plays which include scenes involving intense emotion will have to be played with controlled intensity. In addition, some editing of the script is necessary in order to allow the audience to view the scene without feeling uncomfortable.

In casting the play for arena production, the director faces the obvious question as to the use of experienced or inexperienced actors. Often the director does not have much choice in the matter, but experience has indicated that both types of actors can perform in the arena situation. It is apparent that "theatre-in-the-round" places the audience around the actor so that he does not have the footlights as a barrier to "protect" him nor can he turn away from the audience as a means of concealing his nervousness or his mistakes. Actually this is a negative practice anyway, and possibly it is just as well that the actor must depend on his own inner resources to carry him through the production. Both the inexperienced and experienced actor must, of necessity, focus his attention at all times on his characterization in order to convince the audience of the sincerity of his acting. Then too in arena acting the actor is always aware of the presence of the audience and its stimulating effect. Hence, a definite positive relationship between the actor and the audience is established.

In some instances the neophyte actor is often more receptive to the director's suggestions than the experienced actor since he does not have to adjust to the change in acting technique acquired in the conventional proscenium frame stage. The intimacy enables the actor to adopt a conversational style of delivery and eliminates the problem of lack of projection which often exists as the result of large high school auditoriums or auditoriums that are acoustically inadequate.

Tyrone Guthrie, whose versatility has been demonstrated in the contemporary theatre by his spirited direction of Thornton Wilder's farce-comedy, *The Matchmaker*, as compared with his ad-

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mirable Shakespearean productions at the Stratford (Ontario) Festival, has found distinct advantages for the director in the arena theatre. "Since the director doesn't have to worry about *masking* and *upstaging*," he writes, "balance, grouping, and the flow of movement, particularly in conversational scenes, is easier to arrange. Furthermore, the naturalness and expressiveness of the group becomes more important than the face of any member of the group." The director who has resorted to the method of having an actor turning upstage as means of negativizing himself or eliminating himself from the action cannot use this device. The emphasis on the ensemble or total group is so important in the arena production that even the inexperienced actor feels that he is an important member of the group and his presence is an essential part of the play. "Upstage" and "downstage" and their theatrical significance are eliminated. The director may substitute a seated or standing position as means of focusing attention on specific actors in the play. But at the same time all actors in each scene are usually visible to the audience so that the entire group is aware of their importance at all times.

In place of the usual stage positions the director can visualize the acting area as being the face of a clock. The acting area then, figuratively speaking, is divided into four equal pie-shaped areas with the numbers "twelve," "three,"

"six," and "nine" corresponding to their positions on a clock face. With these numbers serving as convenient directional guides, the director is able to indicate to the actor the stage movement or position desired. The director at all

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times should keep moving around the outside of the acting area so as to see the play as the various portions of the audience will see it.

Since the acting area or set is in full view of the audience not only before the performance but also between acts, the placing or removal of properties may seem to be a problem. Actually, by using an appropriate character in the play, such as the maid, the servant, the housewife, the secretary or some suitable member of the cast, the director can accomplish the task and at the same time preserve the illusion of the play. Since the lighting of the arena production also serves as a curtain for the play, the handling of properties can be accomplished during a black-out, but I have found that both the cast and the audience find the use of a cast member both acceptable and entertaining.

It is the hope that this discussion of directing in the round, although brief and general, may serve to encourage directors who have not as yet tried an arena production to do so. One successful high school director of arena productions has said that it is "economical, fun and exciting" and "an excellent experience for the actors because the audience is so close that its warmth is easily felt." The actor, however, is not the only person to benefit from the arena production. To the creative and imaginative director, directing in the round can be a truly stimulating experience.

THE VICTORIAN AGE

(Continued from page 12)

they walked. Draperies had been added on the sides and at the back, and a bustle held out at the back. The costume at this time was overloaded with trimming, heavy plaitings, puffs, bows of ribbon, and ruffles of lace. Skirts were long and had trains, and several kinds of materials, as well as various colors, were used in the same dress.

In 1880 the styles showed a decided change. This was the beginning of tailor-made clothes for women. In its early years it was fitted snugly to the form, the object being to look as though the figure was melted and poured into the suit, and only men's tailors were considered fit to make these costumes.

In the early part of the period women's shoes were of black prunella, a smooth woolen or mixed stuff, and Turkish slippers of satin, with narrow

toes and no heels. Later, in the middle of the century shoes were made of black kid. They were side-laced and had high heels. Patent leather was also becoming known, and gray shoes were worn in warm weather.

Men's dress became standardized to the point that few changes can be detected. In a slight manner it followed that of women. During the 1830's, when women were compressing the waist by means of stays, men wore a sort of corset belt, and the waistlines of their coats curved in like those of the women. The skirts of these coats were full, reflecting the bell-shape contour of women's skirts. When women were wearing dresses with trains, the skirts of the men's coats dragged on the ground. The sleeves were rather full at the top and gathered into the armholes.

Abrupt changes came in the style of the waistcoats or vests. Velvet was a

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popular material, and figured cashmere was also a favorite. These were fastened with jewelled buttons; sometimes they were diamonds. Color was introduced into the costume through these vests; in 1844 one of crimson velvet embroidered in gold was considered a rival of a white satin embroidered in color. A man of covered wagon days might wear a coat of black broadcloth or wool, a vest of flowered cretonne, and trousers of white wool or flannel, creased on both sides instead of in front and fastened under the foot with a strap of the same material.

It was not until the late 1840's that dark garments became the fashion. In the early 1850's a different style of overcoat developed. It hung loose and full from the shoulder, reached about to the knees, and was closed with four buttons; the sleeves were close at the top and large and open at the hand.

During the trying years of the Civil War the predominant influence in men's clothing was the image of the statesman, such men as Henry Clay, Daniel Webster, and Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln invariably wore a sober black suit, white linen, black scarf tie, a tall silk hat, and boots which were later known as congress gaiters.

A Union soldier wore a navy blue coat trimmed in gold braid and gold buttons, a white cotton shirt, and navy blue trousers, very full around the hips. He wore a navy blue and black hat and black boots.

A Confederate soldier wore a gray-blue coat with brass buttons, gray-blue trousers with creases at the sides, and a gray-blue hat with black trim.

A Confederate recruit wore a butter-nut dyed cloth coat, light tan with brass buttons and bright red collar and cuffs. His trousers were blue-gray with narrow strips of red flannel down side seams. The cap was dark blue and black.

A Union general wore a navy blue wool coat trimmed in gold buttons, a gold colored belt, blue wool trousers and a dark blue hat.

A Confederate general wore a gray-blue coat with brass buttons, and his collar had three gold stars.

A colorful period indeed: hoop skirts, bustles, bicycle costumes for women; colorful coats for men, especially of the South; the blue and gray soldier uniforms of the North and the South; the somber black of Congressmen. Here is indeed the glamor and romance of another day; here was history in the making.

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ONE-ACT PLAY

(Continued from page 11)

the same height, the same weight, the same age, with the same likes and dislikes, the same philosophy of life, the same ambitions? Many first plays find themselves in this dilemma. Four males and three females exactly alike except for a difference in sex—and that not too clearly defined—sit on the stage and talk. The fact that they are more or less personifications of the author himself of course adds to their dullness.

Remember that the world is made up of a variety of people and it is because they are different, sometimes radically so, that the world keeps moving for better or for worse, in an interesting, happy, and sometimes tragic way. And it is only when you put into your play a variety of people—not caricatures—and throw them into a situation and have them work their way out according to each one's own peculiar way, that you begin to have some conflict and movement and direction.

You must spend long hours getting acquainted with your characters. Every little detail about them should be known to you even though very little of it figures directly in the play. How old, how tall, how much education, what hobbies, where born, when, and on and on until you know them better than you know yourself. I have had an entire scene bog down when I introduced a new character with whom I was not completely acquainted. He would come strutting in from the R, and, because he was unknown, a stranger, there would be an embarrassed pause in the conversation—as there often is when a stranger breaks in—and if I tried to force the conversation and get it going again, it would usually be at the expense of the plot. So I would have to call this fellow off stage, get him in a corner and say, "Now look here. I don't know you very well. Just what were you doing in there? What business do you have in this play?" After an hour or so I would send him back on the stage and now, no longer a stranger to me and consequently no longer a stranger to the others of the cast, everything would proceed smoothly. Get to know your characters well. It is one of the first steps in writing a play.

Somewhere along about here you should do some thinking about the stage setting. Do not confuse a fancy set and a score of stage tricks as playwriting. Even if you throw in a chariot race somewhere, you will impress few people if you have it sandwiched in between two pieces of stale bread.¹¹ If your play is a good play, a strong play, it can be done against a curtain, it can be read in the living room, it can be played against the glow of a campfire. If it is anemic, even Cecil B. DeMille can't save it.

You should have some idea of course where your actors are going when they go off R, and where they are coming from when they make an entrance DL. If they are supposed to sit on a sofa, it may be well for you to know that it is at C or LC or RC or against the rear wall. Directors will often change your set around¹² since they have that privilege, but as you write you must have some kind of road map to guide you as you move your people around in the little world you have created. I like to draw out the set, tack it on the wall, and keep my eye on it as I write.

If you have acted¹³ you probably have a healthy respect for a well written speech. You probably also have a great deal of respect for a short speech. Yet, if you are like many people when you first sit down to write a play, you will be unable to resist long and windy exposition. Keep your speeches short. Remember much can be said by a stage movement, a look, a gesture, and of course the right word or combination of words. Don't drag in a lot of unrelated material just because you think it needs saying, or your audience needs educating, or you have an axe to grind. Bring in nothing that does not advance the plot. In a one-act play you are especially pressed for time and you must get to the point immediately.

Now I must admit I haven't even begun to cover everything there is to say about writing one-act plays.¹⁴ What I've tried to do is to call to your attention a few things you should bear in mind while you are preparing to start your play¹⁵ and a few precautions to keep in mind after you get it started. There is one more thing, however, that I think should be mentioned. It is a question that could be asked about any kind of writing and for that matter about any kind of creative activity. How good is *your* critical evaluation of your work going to be? Your friends will probably praise your efforts, and your enemies will either give you the silent treatment or talk behind your back. Understanding people will offer you valuable help; misunderstanding people will work disastrous effects upon your morale especially if you don't have some ability to evaluate yourself. You have to learn when you are wrong; you have to be sure when you are right. Through trial and error you must learn to measure your progress. You—and no one else. If you remain blind to your weaknesses, you will make no progress. If you are over confident, you will make a fool out of yourself. You must successfully combine confidence with humility, common sense with good judgment. You must be your severest critic. It is a writer's protection and his salvation.

12. For better or for worse.

13. See footnote 1.

14. The editor said 1500 to 1800 words.

15. The preparation will probably take days—the actual writing—hours.

11. Hollywood tries it occasionally, but of course they have technicolor, supersonic sound, and a wide, wide, wide screen.

Writing is a lot like swimming. You can read books on how to swim, you can watch great swimmers—it always looks so easy from the edge of the pool—and you can listen for days on end to discourses by deeply tanned life guards, but you will never learn to swim unless you get into the water, and then you will learn more in five minutes than you learned in all the months before. An unrealistic approach to writing is constantly being used by many people. They read books on writing, they subscribe to writer's magazines, they join writer's clubs, and they start talking and acting like writers are supposed to talk and act—in fact they do everything except write. You want to write a play, so sit down and get to work. It will be filled with mistakes, it will be awkward, in fact it may very well be impossible. You did not play Chopin the first day or week or month you sat down at the piano. But once you finish that first play, and we hope it is a one-act, let's get together for another chat. You will be surprised how much more we will have to talk about.

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SIMON'S DIRECTORY OF THEATRICAL MATERIALS, SERVICES AND INFORMATION, compiled by Bernard Simon. Bernard Simon, Pub., 1674 Broadway, N.Y. 19; 96 pp.

Some years ago the American Educational Theatre Association and the National Thespian Society published a small booklet that listed sources of the more common theatrical materials—and a handier guide was never published! Over the years, however, some of the addresses have changed, new firms have sprung up, and old ones disappeared. Here at last is a thoroughly amazing new directory that covers just about everything that any theatre worker could possibly have need of. In addition to the obvious categories, such as draperies, scenery equipment, costume and property materials, the less-common categories are also well represented: play agents, magician's apparatus, auditorium supplies, advertising materials, theatre associations, theatre book dealers (plus remarkably complete bibliographies of the well known books in every phase of theatre publication), contest and conference listings, theatre and sound-effect recordings, college drama departments, and even retailers of tents—plus many more! The listings are easy to find, being alphabetically arranged in sections under the heading of the state in which you live. It is difficult of course to ascertain whether or not all listings are absolutely accurate; but a check with your reviewer's files has indicated that the regional firms with whom he does business are all included and

and so on. Garry Simpson is responsible for the first—and probably best—essay. He emphasizes the necessity for good content (preferably realistic scripts in TV), right casting, sound and detailed organization, and the working out of the show on paper before the rehearsals. Like many theatre directors he also advises completion of blocking, then memorization of lines, and, finally, polishing. In fact most theatre directors will concur with just about everything said by any of these directors, such as the belief that theatre experience is the best training for the TV actor, that the script is the most important element in a good TV show, and that a director's function is to present a point of view about his play through selective stress and picturization. A class studying TV production will find this book an invaluable glimpse behind scenes and a revelation of what, as the author justifiably contends, the "doers" do instead of what the "sayers" say.

HOW TO OVERCOME NERVOUS TENSION AND SPEAK WELL IN PUBLIC by Alfred Tack. Denison, 1955; 242 pp.

Author Tack is the director of his own school to teach adults, especially business men and women, to speak more effectively. This book is the result of his years of teaching and observation, and most of his advice is fairly standard theory that would be subscribed to by most teachers of speech—especially his detailed instructions on how to organize a speech. A few

are some photographs and line drawings, but in a "how-to" book of this type more would be of great help. A few English terms might momentarily confuse the American reader because they do not always agree with our theatre jargon. Though the major ones are all discussed, some of the less frequently used make-up materials (collodion, glycerine, tooth enamel, etc.) are not mentioned. Finally, some make-up experts will probably object to a few of the author's rules, such as, for example, his directions for the application of rouge to female faces of various basic shapes. And yet many teachers will appreciate the conciseness of the treatment and find this book useful as a guide for teaching their make-up classes, especially if they can amplify the material through lecture and demonstration.

GOLDEN BOOK OF CHURCH PLAYS, edited by Lawrence Brings. Denison, 1955; 476 pp.

Finding a good religious play for church production is usually a difficult job, for entirely too many of them are written by people whose knowledge of drama and theatre is obviously dubious or by crusaders who would be more at home in the pulpit or on a soapbox instead of a stage. It is doubtful whether poor drama can ever inspire fine religious feelings, but too often the church drama director, on a small budget and with few or no physical production facilities, has little choice. Although a few of the twenty-three plays in this collection come dangerously close to being contrived and mechanically "creaky," happily most of them are much better than the average. They run from one to four scenes, and average between thirty and sixty minutes playing time; some require (or could use) fairly elaborate costumes and settings, but many do not. All scripts may be presented without royalty payments if copies are purchased for each cast member. Most of the plays are Biblical, but, fortunately, only a few attempt an archaic sentence structure and wording to give the impression of a past period. The most effective play, however, is still the first one in the book, a modern version of the prodigal son. This volume should be a good investment for any group interested in producing religious drama that has some subtlety and finesse about it.

THE MICROPHONE AND YOU by Alice Keith. Hastings House, 1955; 58 pp.

This pamphlet offers brief instructions for presenting talks, interviews, and discussions on radio and TV, along with several sample scripts for each type of program. The second part discusses vocal and physical delivery problems and includes some typical exercises for training in these techniques. The material is certainly sound enough, having its roots in the thirty years' experience of the author in broadcasting. Therefore in spite of its conciseness the booklet includes a great deal of fundamental material that is valuable.

BLUE RIBBON PLAYS FOR GIRLS, edited by Sylvia Kamerman. Plays, Inc., 1955; 395 pp.

Thirty-five short plays, for large and small casts, are in this collection, divided into age groups for girls from high school to the lower grades. Several of the plays are quite effective, especially some of those that dramatize moments from times of Louisa Alcott, Lincoln, the Bronte sisters, and others. Some of them point their morals a bit too obviously and without real motivation; but, on the whole, the simplicity of the plays will make them most useful to many directors who want to or must do a simple production. All are royalty-free.

EASY CHURCH PLAYS by Karin Asbrand. Baker, 1955; 91 pp.

Ten religious plays, Biblical and modern, are offered to women and girls free of royalty charges if cast copies are purchased. Most of the scripts can be easily produced, although a few will allow more elaborate productions if desired.

BRIEF VIEWS

By WILLARD FRIEDERICH

with accurate addresses. If errors are found, the editor requests corrections from his readers so that subsequent yearly revisions may be brought up to date. Any dramatics director should find this directory among his most useful possessions.

AUDITIONING FOR TV by Martin Begley and Douglas MacCrae. Hastings House, 1955; 107 pp.

The publishers of the series of Communication Arts Books have added another interesting and revealing book to the list. Actually, the authors go far above and beyond the call of duty, for not only do they discuss the problems and practices of TV auditions themselves, but they also discuss quite realistically the preparation of the actor for his audition. Their analysis of this preparation is, in essence, an analysis of the art and craft of TV (or radio or stage) acting: analysis of the script, psychology of acting, choosing roles and materials that fit the performer, handling of dialects, sight reading and interpretation, improvisation and pantomime that stimulate creative imagination, and so on. Any teacher will approve of the authors' emphasis upon an actor's preparation through sound education and theatre practice and experience; in short, any youngster who thinks TV (or any other) acting is a pure gift that requires no supplementation will have his eyes opened when he reads this book. There are also two fifteen minute TV scripts included for practice. Incidentally, of course the mysterious and exhausting job of TV performing is further fully explored.

HOW TO DIRECT FOR TELEVISION, edited by William Kaufman. Hastings House, 1955; 96 pp.

Although this is yet another good volume in the Communication Arts Series, it is not as provocative as Mr. Kaufman's previous one, *How to Write for Television*. The same format is used: a compilation of essays by nine leading TV directors who have been responsible for such fine shows as Robert Montgomery Presents, Omnibus, Kraft, Philco-Goodyear, Elgin, Lux,

ideas are perhaps more nearly original with him, such as his "minute plan" for learning to relax and his suggestions for the makeup of note-cards to be used while giving the speech. Although your reviewer has never used either idea in exactly this way, they both look as though they should work quite well for the average speaker. The chief weakness of the book lies in the brief and rather superficial handling of the section on delivery; the assumption seems to be that one has merely to speak often and he will inevitably learn to speak well. As Prof. O'Neill remarked years ago, "Practice does not make perfect; it merely makes permanent." A great deal more advice could—and should—be provided on the matter of techniques of delivery, particularly on physical re-enforcement and vocal variety and effectiveness. Lastly, many who labor in the field will be somewhat skeptical of the author's belief that it is easy for anyone to learn to speak well in public; it may be possible (and some may even doubt that), but for many it is never easy. And experienced teachers will never be able to go along with such flat assertions as "Once you know the fundamental techniques of speaking in public, you can never make a bad speech." Perhaps Mr. Tack wishes to encourage his readers—an excellent purpose, and a necessary one—but there should be some other, more realistic way of doing it.

MAKE-UP FOR THE AMATEUR by Callum Mill. Albyn Press, 1955; 60 pp.

One of the English series, Modern Stage Handbooks, this small book contains a surprisingly large amount of information. The foundations of make-up (light and shadow, color, and physiology) are briefly but soundly presented, in accord with the most accepted modern theory. The chief drawback of the book seems to be that many small but necessary details are touched too lightly or taken for granted altogether; thus, the reader who knows something about make-up may read the book with understanding, but the absolute beginner would frequently be lost because the information is not clear or complete enough. There

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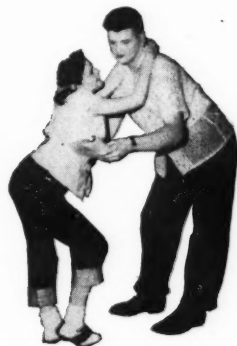
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